

2014 Current Population Survey Questionnaire Changes and 2015 Data Collection

Victoria Velkoff, PhD

Expert Meeting on Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance

March 20, 2015

Outline

- Background on question changes for the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC)
- Implementation of the redesigned questions in 2014
- 2014 releases
- 2015 data collection
- Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE)

Redesigned Questions in 2014 ASEC

- For income, to reduce nonresponse, and improve the questions, particularly on pension withdrawals and asset income
- For health insurance, to improve accuracy and ensure that coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was properly captured

Income Questions: The Need for Improvement

- Questions had not been substantially changed since 1980
- Pension questions did not adequately collect defined contribution plan withdrawals
- Amount nonresponse was a large and growing problem
- Asset income was not well reported

2014 ASEC Changes for Income Questions

- Asked all questions about reciprocity before collecting amounts
- Customized question order based on household characteristics
- Collected amount ranges for those unable to provide exact amounts
- Added questions on retirement account withdrawals
- Added more detailed questions on asset types and amounts

2014 ASEC Changes to Health Insurance Questions

- Culmination of 14 years of research
 - Interagency groups, academic and private researchers, state agencies
 - Census Bureau conducted field tests in 2010 and 2013
 - Federal register notices in 2009, 2012, 2013
- Key Finding - Underreporting of health insurance coverage
 - Old questions – household level for previous calendar year
 - Studies matched CPS to administrative records (Univ. of Minnesota)
 - Missed short spells of coverage (Medicaid)

Health Insurance Questions: The Need for Improvement

- Estimates of the uninsured population inflated
 - Confusion between current year and previous calendar year
 - Estimates biased due to respondent recall issues over the 1 ¼ year recall period
 - Undercounts of some types of health insurance
 - Missing some people's coverage
- Law change:
 - Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act complicates health insurance measurement. Need additional information on obtaining health insurance through new marketplace and changes to employer-sponsored insurance

Testing of Redesigned Questions

- Income questions cognitively tested in 2011
- Health Insurance questions cognitively tested in 2009
- SHIPP field test in 2010
- Cognitively tested exchange questions in Massachusetts in 2012

**CPS ASEC 2013
Content Test
(reference year 2012)**

**Incorporated in
CPS ASEC 2014
(reference year 2013)**

Implementation of the Redesigned Questions in 2014

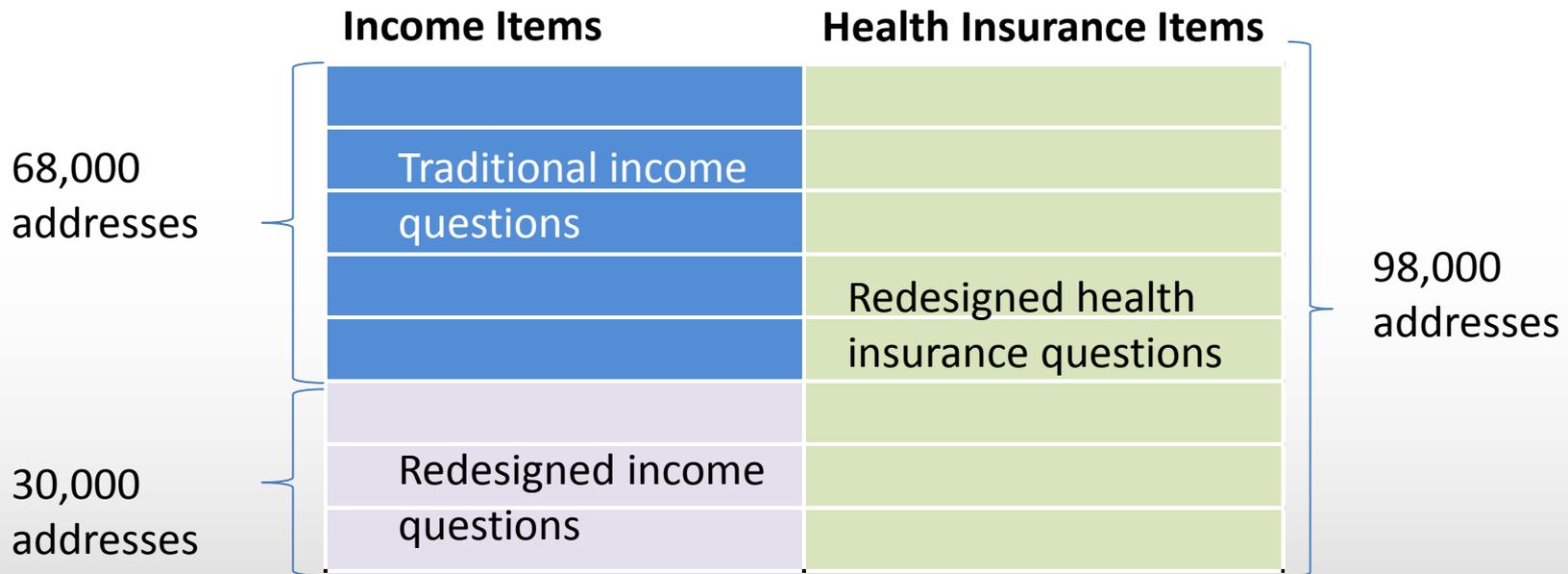
Split Sample Implementation for Income:

- New questions used for part of the 2014 ASEC sample (30,000 eligible addresses)
- Split-panel design preserves time series and provides a bridge between old and new series

Full Sample for Health Insurance:

- Needed to establish a 2013 baseline before major provisions of ACA took effect
- A full ASEC sample provides reliable estimates for small groups

Implementation and the ASEC Sample



Reports Released on September 16, 2014



The 2013 Reports: Income & Poverty and Health Insurance

	Income Items	Health Insurance Items
68,000 addresses		
	Traditional income questions	
		Redesigned health insurance questions
30,000 addresses	Redesigned income questions	

2013 Income & Poverty, and Health Insurance reports based on a sample of 68,000 addresses, representing the total U.S. population.

Additional 2014 ASEC Releases

- Public use file based on the 68,000 addresses – September 2014
- Supplemental poverty measure and report based on the 68,000 addresses – October 2014
- Public use file based on the 30,000 addresses with the redesigned income questions – early 2015
- Set of full file weights – early 2015
- Table packages on migration, family status, etc. based on a full file but with no income variables – first quarter 2015

Research on Redesigned Income Questions

We analyzed these data to evaluate the income questions and compared back to the standard questions.

Income Items	Health Insurance Items
Traditional income questions	
	Redesigned health insurance questions
Redesigned income questions	

Legislative Language

*For necessary expenses for collecting, compiling, analyzing, preparing and publishing statistics, provided for by law, \$248,000,000: Provided, That, from amounts provided herein, funds may be used for promotion, outreach, and marketing activities: Provided further, That **the Bureau of the Census shall collect data for the Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey using the same health insurance questions included in previous years, in addition to the revised questions implemented in the Current Population Survey beginning in February 2014.***

2015 CPS Data Collection

- Production CPS ASEC
 - Redesigned income and health insurance for the full sample
 - Currently in the field
 - Will release in September 2015
- Parallel CPS ASEC
 - Parallel sample of about 28,000 addresses
 - Asking old income and health insurance questions
 - In the field March 2015
 - Will release data as a research file with a working a paper (date yet to be determined)

Goals of the Parallel Sample

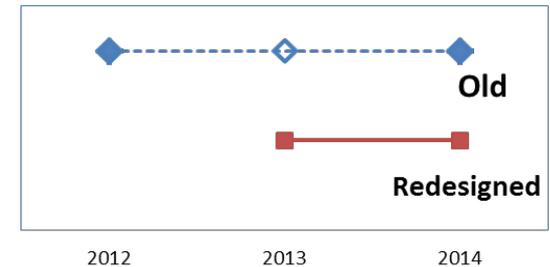
Parallel sample will provide ability to:

Compare health insurance coverage over time

- Can compare CY 2012 (collected in 2013 ASEC) to CY 2014 (collected in the 2015 Parallel ASEC)
- Model CY 2013

Compare health insurance coverage between the old and redesigned questions for CY 2014

- Percent with health insurance coverage for entire calendar year
- Percent not covered at any time during calendar year
- Percent with public health insurance coverage
- Percent with private health insurance coverage
 - Crossed by key demographic groups



Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE)

- Census Bureau releases modeled-based health insurance estimates for all U.S. counties on an annual basis
- Released the 2013 SAHIE estimates – March 17, 2015
- SAHIE is the only source of single-year estimates for health insurance for every county

SAHIE Inputs

- American Community Survey (ACS):
 - 1-year estimates (published and unpublished)
 - 5-year estimates
- Census 2010
- Population Estimates
- County Business Patterns

- Aggregated Federal Tax Information (FTI)

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamp) participation records

- Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) participation records

2014 SAHIE Estimates

- Typically the Medicaid data in the SAHIE model are lagged by a few years (e.g., 2013 estimates used 2011 Medicaid data)
- Using lagged Medicaid data for the 2014 SAHIE estimates (released in 2016) will present an issue
- We are exploring different options for obtaining more current Medicaid data

Contact Information

Victoria Velkoff
Division Chief

Social, Economic, and Housing Statistics Division

victoria.a.velkoff@census.gov

301-763-3234